Kerry
Your Natural Escape
Comhair, Cabhair, Cairdeas

Introduction

County Kerry has been welcoming visitors for generations and getting there has never been easier or more affordable. Located on Ireland's south-west coast, fanned by the Gulf Stream, Kerry's unspoilt nature, stunning landscapes, rich and distinct culture makes it the most visited regional destination for overseas holidaymakers.

The south-west region contains some of Ireland's most iconic scenery, including Killarney and its famous lakes, the awe-inspiring landscapes of the Dingle, Iveragh and Beara peninsulas, the historic town of Tralee and the rich pasturelands and sandy beaches of North Kerry.

County Kerry hosts Ireland's highest mountains, longest walking trails and the oldest National Park (Killarney). It has the longest section of the **Wild Atlantic Way** touring route (563km). It boasts a treasure trove of historic and prehistoric sites and monuments, including the UNESCO World Heritage Site of **Skellig Michael**. It has a long established cultural tradition where Irish music, dance, literature, arts and crafts and the Irish language are cherished. Kerry people are renowned for their hospitality and warm, genuine welcome. Kerry also has the most developed tourism industry with some 12,000 registered bedrooms, signature festivals and events, quality visitor attractions, world famous golf courses, and is a vibrant eco-tourism, marine and green tourism destination. It is an activity and adventure holidaymaker's paradise.

WILD ATLANTIC WAY
SLÍ AN ATLANTAIGH FHIÁIN

Ballybunion Cliff Walk

Tralee Bay

Kenmare Bay

Cromwell Point Lighthouse

Wild Atlantic Way

Derrynane Harbour

Slea Head

Kerry has the longest section of the Wild Atlantic Way coastal touring route and is home to iconic historic sites, picturesque villages and some of the most breath-taking scenery in Ireland including The Ring of Kerry.

The Wild Atlantic Way extends along the Atlantic Coast for over 2400km from Donegal to West Cork. The Kerry section stretches for 563km from Tarbert on the River Shannon to Kilmacalogue on the Beara Peninsula.

Kerry shares the Cliff Coast zone with Clare and Southern Peninsulas with Cork. The Kerry section includes some of Ireland's most spectacular coastal drives and scenery – North Kerry Coastal Drive with the seaside resorts of **Ballybunion** and **Ballyheigue**, **Tralee Bay**, **Conor Pass** and **Slea Head** drive on the **Dingle Peninsula**, the **Ring of Kerry**, **Skellig Ring** and **Beara Peninsula** at its southern end. Nestled along the route are picturesque towns and villages, Blue Flag beaches, fishing and seaside resorts, historic sites, visitor attractions, traditional pubs and cultural centres, walking and cycling trails.

For star gazers, South West Kerry has Europe's only IDA Gold Tier Dark Sky Reserve with over 6,000 stars visible on a clear night.

In Kerry, you start your Wild Atlantic Way journey in Tarbert and travel south or alternatively in Kenmare and travel north. There is a wide selection of accommodation to choose from right along the route from 5* Hotels to B&B, Guest House, Self-Catering holiday homes and caravan and camping parks.

Killarney

Killarney National Park

Gap of Dunloe

Killarney is regarded as the birthplace of Irish tourism. It has been a 'must see' for generations of visitors. The town is nestled in a mountain valley on the edge of three glorious lakes, set amidst 10,000 hectares of pristine National Park. Killarney's trademark is its stunning scenery, great hospitality and a great choice of hotels and guesthouses, making it Ireland's leading year-round tourism destination.

The Jaunting Cars still carry visitors around the scenic highlights and the picturesque laneways are as bright and colourful as ever. **Killarney National Park** is world famous for its lakes and numerous historical, ecological and archaeological sites. You can visit the stunning Victorian **Muckross House, Gardens and Traditional Farms**, the atmospheric ruins of **Muckross Abbey**, medieval **Ross Castle**, **Torc Waterfall**, the tranquil monastery ruins on **Innisfallen Island** and the newly restored **Killarney House** in the town centre – former home of the Kenmare and McShain families.

Visitors are entertained right through the year with events, festivals, concerts and Irish music in the local pubs.

The area is an adventure paradise with golfing, fishing, horse riding, canoeing, cycling, mountain climbing and walking and was chosen as the venue of the 2014 World Travel Adventure Summit.

Ross Castle

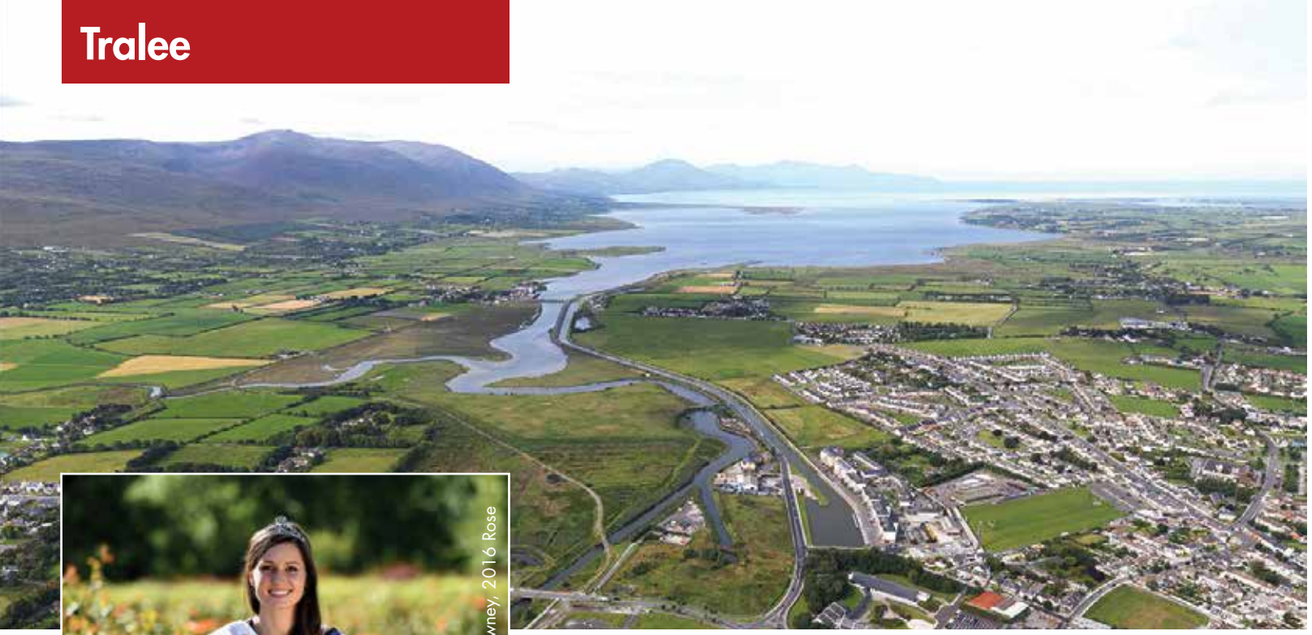
McGillicuddy Reeks

Torc Waterfall

Coronas at INEC

Muckross House

Tralee



Maggie McEldowney, 2016 Rose

Tralee – Capital of Kerry – lies in the heart of The Kingdom and is a great base for exploring the Wild Atlantic Way. It has all the facilities of a county capital: historic buildings, visitor attractions, award winning town park and rose garden, fine dining and is home of the famous Rose of Tralee International Festival (mid-August) which connects the Global Irish community.

Tralee is 800 years old, vividly re-enacted in the Kerry County Museum, and is a vibrant shopping, event and festival centre. Local pubs provide traditional Irish music nightly. It is Ireland's all-weather capital with a range of visitor attractions including **Siamsa Tíre** – the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, **Kerry County Museum**, **Aqua Dome Waterworld**, **Blennerville Windmill**, **Kingdom Greyhound Racing Stadium** and **Tralee Bay Wetlands Centr**e. Tralee has over 1,000 registered hotel bedrooms, guest houses, self-catering apartments and a 4* caravan and camping park.

The historic **Ardfert Cathedral**, **Banna Strand** – recently voted Ireland's top beach by Trip Advisor, **Fenit Marina** and fishing village and **Crag Cave** in Castleisland are just a short drive away. The Arnold Palmer-designed **Tralee Golf Course** is one of the finest links courses in the world and Tralee is also the starting point for the **Dingle Way**, **Kerry Camino** and **North Kerry walking trails**.

Siamsa Tíre

Kerry County Museum

Blennerville Windmill

Fenit Strand

Craft Display in The Square

The Dingle Peninsula

Coumeenoole, Dingle Peninsula

Great Blasket Island

Dingle Peninsula – cited as 'the most beautiful place on earth' by the National Geographic travel magazine.

Dingle town and the peninsula has something to offer everyone, with its sandy beaches, walking routes for all abilities, a thriving Irish language (Gaeltacht) community, a rich musical tradition, fine dining, sea angling, sailing, arts and film festivals, talented craft-makers and some of the best surfing in Ireland. The town has an excellent **Oceanworld Aquarium** and **Whiskey Distillery** open to the public.

The Dingle Peninsula, or in Irish Corca Dhuibhne, is a unique storehouse of Irish cultural heritage captured in the **Blasket Island Centre** in Dún Chaoin. Until recently, the peninsula was remote from the influences of the modern world, and this meant that the language and traditions of the area have survived intact to a greater degree than in most of Ireland.

It is impossible to visit the Dingle Peninsula and not be impressed by its archaeological heritage. It has the richest concentration of Early Christian sites in Ireland including the **Gallarus Oratory**, **Kilmalkedar** and **Riasc**. When one combines each site's folklore and mythology, which have been passed orally from generation to generation through the Irish language, one can begin to understand the unique and complex history of the peninsula.

Dingle Harbour

Fungi – the friendly dolphin

Cloghane-Brandon

Gallarus Oratory

The famous Antarctic Explorer **Tom Crean** (1877–1938) was born in Annascaul and Irish patriot **Thomas Ashe** (1885–1917) in nearby Kinard. The Wild Atlantic Way route from Annascaul to Castlemaine passes **Inch Beach**, one of most spectacular beaches in Ireland.

Along the less discovered northern shore of the peninsula are **Castlegregory** and the **Maharee Islands**, famous as a water sports destination, and further west **Cloghane**, the main access point to Mount Brandon, and the picturesque fishing village of Brandon.

Dingle Oceanworld

Ring of Kerry

Mountain Stage

The Kerry Way

The Ring of Kerry is one of the Ireland's most famous tourist destinations and it doesn't disappoint. Relax on one of the many sandy beaches, enjoy walking the Kerry Way, explore Ireland's highest mountains or take a trip to Skellig Michael, the famous island hermitage and UNESCO World Heritage site.

The Ring of Kerry is a 179km long circular tourist route from **Killarney** to **Kenmare**, then around the **Iveragh Peninsula** to **Killorglin** – passing through **Parknasilla**, **Sneem**, **Derrynane**, **Waterville**, **Cahersiveen**, **Glenbeigh**, **Killorglin** – before returning to Killarney via the N72. You can detour onto the spectacular Skelligs Ring near Waterville to visit **Ballinskelligs**, **Portmagee** – main departure point for **Skellig Michael** featured in the latest Star Wars movies and the exquisite Valentia Island. There is a bridge connection to Valentia Island at Portmagee and a car ferry link back to the mainland from Knightstown.

Popular points along the route include **Muckross House and Gardens** and **Torc Waterfall** (near Killarney), **Kenmare Stone Circle**, **Sheen Valley Heritage Park** near Kenmare, **Staigue Fort** and **Derrynane House**, home of **Daniel O'Connell** (1775–1847). Valentia Island hosts a number of attractions including the **Skelligs Experience**, Wild Atlantic Way Discovery Points at **Bray Head**, **Kerry Cliffs** and **Geokaun Mountain**, the recently opened visitor centre at **Cromwell Point**

Kerry Dark Reserve, Valentia

Leacanboula Stone Fort, Cahersiveen

Waterville Golf Club

Kenmare Town

Lighthouse, **Glanleam Subtropical Gardens** and **Trans-Atlantic Cable Exhibition** in the picturesque village of Knightstown.

Cahersiveen boasts the only church in Christendom dedicated to a lay person – the **Daniel O'Connell Memorial Church**. The town is an ideal outdoor adventure base; it has a large marina and offers boat tours and sea angling. The nearby Cnoc na dTobar, which stands at 690 metres high, is an ancient pilgrimage site.

Along the southernmost edge of the **Iveragh Peninsula**, the **Ring of Kerry** skirts the peaceful, sheltered Kenmare Bay. At the head of the Bay, where the two mighty peninsulas of Iveragh and Beara meet is **Kenmare Town** – an elegant 17th century market town. This welcoming, lively place buzzes with 5* hotels and chic spas, B&Bs, smart restaurants, arty shops, cosy cafes and dozens of friendly pubs with live traditional music sessions. For nature enthusiasts guided boat tours of the bay are offered from Kenmare pier.

For star gazers, South West Kerry, centred in the Ballinskelligs area, is the **Kerry International Dark Sky Reserve**, one of only three Gold Tier Dark Sky Reserves of its kind in the World.

North Kerry

Nun's Beach, Ballybunion

Banna Strand

North Kerry is an undiscovered gem with its seaside resorts like Ballybunion, Ballyheigue, Banna and Fenit. The literary centre and heritage town of Listowel is just a short detour off the main route and Tralee, the county capital, boasts a range of all-weather visitor attractions unmatched anywhere outside of Dublin.

The North Kerry Coast is a key gateway to the southern route of the Wild Atlantic Way via the Shannon Car Ferry which has regular sailings between Tarbert and County Clare. The route from Tarbert to Listowel features the historic sites of **Lislaughtin Friary** and **Carrigafoyle Castle** near Ballylongford. **Ballybunion** is a favoured destination of Irish holidaymakers. It is an attractive coastal town, seaside and watersports resort. It is known worldwide for its 'champagne air', championship golf, EU Blue Flag sandy beaches, seaweed baths and stunning cliff walks.

A Wild Atlantic Way 'Discovery Point' is situated overlooking Ballybunion Men's Beach and the single-walled, castle ruin on the Castle Green that gives the town its unique appeal. On the sand hills above the Long Strand runs the world famous Ballybunion Golf Course comprising two world class links courses favoured by US golfers and Presidents.

Further along the coast is the seaside resort of **Ballyheigue**, **Banna Strand**, the fishing village of **Fenit**, all Blue Flag Beaches with good water sports facilities.

Tarbert Bridewell

Listowel Castle

Ardfert Cathedral

Listowel is a traditional market town and its history dates back to 1303. This heritage town offers you a great selection of charming shops, farmers' market and also has a great variety of superb restaurants and pubs.

Listowel is Ireland's Literary Capital and its annual Writers' Week Festival takes place the last weekend of May each year. **Listowel Writers' Museum**, **St John's Theatre & Arts Centre**, **Fitzmaurice Castle** all located in the Square and nearby **Lartigue Railway** are also worth a visit.

Playwright, John B. Keane

Events & Festivals

Rose of Tralee Festival

Christmas in Killarney

4th July Celebration

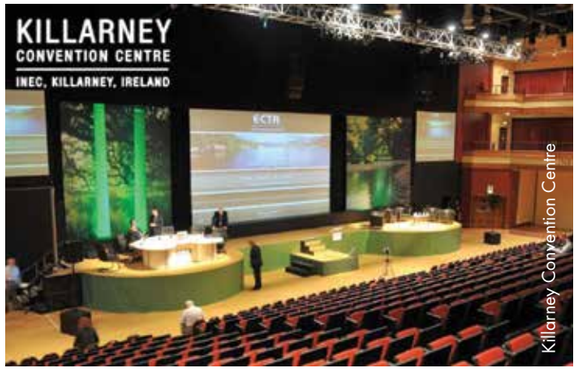
Kerry hosts over 500 events and festivals annually ranging from local community based events (e.g. pattern days, music festivals, food fairs, walking and cycling festivals), major events like the **Rose of Tralee International Festival**, **Puck Fair** and **K-Fest** in Killorglin, **Listowel Writers' Week**, **Halloween Howl** in Kenmare, **Féile na Bealtaine** and **Other Voices** in Dingle, and the **July 4th Celebration** of American Independence and **Christmas in Killarney** festivals.

Kerry also hosts international activity events and challenges like marathons, cycling and triathlons.

Festivals and events are held throughout the year and full listings and details are available on www.tockify.com/kerryyournaturalescape.

Since the Gathering Year many families from the US and across the globe, like the Stacls of Listowel and Sullivan's from South Kerry, like to return to Ireland for family reunions.

Puck Fair, Killorglin



Killarney Convention Centre

Féile Bealtaine, Dingle

Wind Surfing, The Maharees

Sive Thriathlon

Ring of Kerry Cycle

Getting to Kerry

Kerry Airport

Minard Castle

Travelling to Kerry has never been easier or more affordable both from international destinations and from within Ireland, with good road and rail connections.

BY AIR: Kerry Airport is located just outside Farranfore village and mid-way between Tralee and Killarney (17km from Killarney and 19km from Tralee). Daily flights to Dublin and London and several weekly and seasonal flights to Europe are available. **Kerry Airport** now offers connections to the USA and Canada with check-in available for New York, Chicago, Boston, Orlando, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hartford Connecticut, Newark or Toronto with Aer Lingus, with onward boarding pass from Dublin. Your luggage will automatically be transferred, allowing you time to complete time saving immigration checks at Dublin Airport. To plan and book flights – ***www.kerryairport.ie***.

BY BUS: Bus Éireann and a range of private bus operators offer direct services to Kerry and provides year round connectivity within the county. Visit ***www.buseireann.ie*** and ***www.locallinkkerry.ie*** to plan your route and check timetables.

BY RAIL: Railway stations are located in Killarney, Tralee, Farranfore and Rathmore. See ***www.irishrail.ie*** for more information.

BY CAR FROM:
Dublin – via the M7 and N21 (approx travel time 3.5 hours;)
Galway & **Limerick** – via the N21 or on the N69 Coast Road;
Cork – via the N22;
Rosslare Harbour – via N25 and N22.

BY FERRY: Travel to Kerry by ferry service from Killimer, Co Clare to Tarbert, Co Kerry. Visit ***www.shannonferries.com*** for sailing schedule and timetable. From Tarbert, travel along the N69 Road to Listowel and onto other towns and villages in the county such as Tralee, Killarney, Dingle, Kenmare, Cahersiveen and Killorglin or take the Wild Atlantic Way to the seaside resorts of Ballybunion and Ballyheigue.

Front Cover: Skellig Micahel – UNESCO World Heritage Site
Back Cover: Carrigafoyle Castle, Ballylongford

Ciarraí

Éalú Nádúrtha

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